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gfiles
INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

AIR Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major, commissioned on December 31, 1967, has flown over 7,000 hours in the Sentinel, T-6G, Mi-4, Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters. He commanded the IAF's first Mi-17 squadron, which operated at Siachen Glacier, and led another Mi-17 squadron into battle during IPKF operations in Sri Lanka, winning the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry).

He has held a number of important staff and field appointments–Joint Director (Helicopter Operations) and Director, Operations (Transport & Helicopter). In 1999, he took over as the Air Officer Commanding, Leh after the Kargil conflict. In 2002, he was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, promoted to Air Vice Marshal and appointed Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Personnel Airmen & Civilians) at Air HQ.

On becoming Air Marshal in 2004, he moved to HQ Integrated Defence Staff as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations) and directed the operations of the Indian Armed Forces in India and abroad in the aftermath of the tsunami. In 2005, he was appointed Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command and conducted exercises with the US, Singaporean and French Air Forces. He was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in 2006. He took over as Chief of Air Staff on March 31, 2007.

interviewed by ANIL TYAGI

gfiles: *Where does the Indian Air Force fit into the overall scheme of national security?*

Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major: The Indian Air Force is an integral part of the national security apparatus and is responsible for the

SHARAD SAXENA

Air Chief Marshal Major with a model of the Su-30

BIG BOSS

air chief marshal | fali homi major

'I expect the AWACS to be with us by March'

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security of our sovereign airspace. Aerospace power today possesses immense capability and provides our national leadership with very viable response options, across the entire spectrum of conflict. The very presence of a credible and capable air force is a great deterrent and ensures stability and peace in the neighbourhood. What many do not realize is that air defence of our sovereign airspace is a 24x7 process for the IAF, even in peace time. We are responsible for monitoring air traffic over Indian airspace and for taking action to prevent any air violations. The IAF is one of the more important instruments of national power, and national security without aerospace power in today's context would spell doom.

gfiles: *Aren't we focused a bit too much on the northern and eastern borders, to the neglect of the southern? What steps are being taken to overcome such lacunae, such as by positioning Su-30s in the Andamans?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: Any air force is a capital-intensive service, be it in terms of equipment or infrastructure. Most of our airfields and infrastructure were put in place decades ago, based on the threat perception existing then. Today, with long-endurance and very capable fighters and Flight Refueling Aircraft, we have flexibility as far as basing of our assets is concerned. Our basing philosophy has been worked out keeping in mind the costs involved for infrastructure, and the need to respond to potential threats in our areas of interest. Su-30 MKI fighters have regularly operated from the Andamans and continue to do so. Air defence and other measures are also in place to augment our capability in the southern peninsular region.

'Most of our airfields and infrastructure were put in place decades ago, based on the threat perception existing then. Today, with long- endurance and very capable fighters and Flight Refueling Aircraft, we have flexibility as far as basing of our assets is concerned'

gfiles: *The AWACS induction was scheduled for October last year. Is it on schedule? If not, what are the reasons for delay and when is the first aircraft expected in Agra? Which countries have finally contributed and in what areas in the making of the AWACS?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: There has been some delay in the arrival of the AWACS. I now expect it to be with us in late February/March. This is not a readily available "Commercially Off The Shelf" (COTS) purchase. It is a project of immense complexity, involving a number of players and is being built to our specifications. India, Russia and Israel are the major participants. We are willing to accept this minor delay rather than any shortcomings in the product.

gfiles: *Regarding Rotary Lift Capability, when will you sign the contract for 197 helicopters? Are you looking at replacement as well as augmentation of Mi-26?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: A combined Request for Proposal (RFP), to cater to the requirements of the Army and the IAF, for the Light Utility Helicopter had been floated through a global tender. The received proposals are being technically evaluated. The IAF will acquire 125 aircraft in this class. We are also actively processing the case for the procurement of helicopters in the Heavy Lift class.

gfiles: *What is the progress on the acquisition of attack helicopters? Has the IAF selected the VIP helicopter? How many numbers are being sought and when is the contract likely to be signed?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The responses for our RFP for the attack helicopters have been received and are being evaluated. The process for selection of a helicopter for VIP communications duties is at an advanced stage. We intend to procure 12 of these helicopters.

gfiles: *What is the progress on the MTA that is expected to fly around 2013? And what steps have been taken to upgrade the AN-32s or replace them?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The MTA

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From the Editor-in-Chief

WITH India's western front heating up following the Pakistan-based terror attacks in Mumbai, the nation's eyes are once again on the preparedness, combat readiness and morale of the armed forces. Strategic doctrines, the performance of modern equipment, avionics, integrated surveillance, and defence command and control are topics that are as commonly discussed today as the upcoming general election early this year.

And nowhere will these matters come more sharply into focus than at the Aero India 2009 conclave in Bangalore. I use the word "conclave" rather than "show" because the event promises to be as much of a process of churning of thoughts and ideas as an exhibition of competitive designs and real-time performance of air power.

This is because the debate on India's security has now reached a level of maturity unmatched in the past. In the not too recent past, public discussion of India's strategic capabilities, weaknesses, SWOT analyses were forbidden. There was a public consensus that these subjects were best kept secret or left to a select band of officers and officials. If there were points of contention they were out of the public domain because of "national security".

But as our country has matured, debate on how best to enhance national security as well as maintain our armed forces as the cutting edge of the defence of our sovereignty has entered the public domain. Think tanks, specialized journals and journalists, defence manuals, serving and retired officers, and joint defence exercises with other nations now proffer a plethora of ideas, in writing as well as at seminars, for making technical, managerial and R&D progress in the security environment.

India's armed strength is no longer seen as romantic flypasts and parades and bands and battalion reunions – out of sight and out of mind. Military power – its enhancement, maintenance, capability and deployment – is today a subject for critical analysis and recommendation. A nation doesn't become strong simply by having a military but by ensuring that a whole slew of coordinates – defence governance, administration, speedy procurement procedures, weapons modernization, pay parity, fair promotion policies, a degree of autonomy from bureaucracy – are factored into ensuring the military's viability and resilience.

In this month's *gfiles* some prominent voices address these issues. The Air Chief, Fali Homi Major, says: "The Indian Air Force is one of the most important instruments of national power, and national security without aerospace power in today's context would spell doom."

But this vision needs to be backed by the national will and translated into aggressive public policy. Air Marshal Narayan Menon writes that our Air Force is still starved for assets because we have still not developed a strategic culture and a calibrated joint services approach to military hardware requirement.

Air Marshal Brijesh Jayal bemoans our archaic bureaucratic approach to managing national defence research, while Air Marshal Vinod Patney looks into the future – which he says is now – and calls for multi-pronged management for the effective use of space for civilian and military purposes.

It is my sincere hope that these messages will strike the right targets at Aero India 2009.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

LETTERS: I enjoyed the two articles on LK Advani (December 2008) and Jaswant Singh (October 2008). They were very informative. Every politician in this country wants to be the Prime Minister one day. The billion-plus nation that we are, we often forget that we need good governance. Unfortunately, in the past two decades, the country has suffered for want of a Prime Minister who could relate to the common man and focus attention on providing him the basics for living. We need a leader who is able to read the pulse of the masses. One cannot become PM merely by desiring it and by employing skill in intra- and inter-party lobbying. With a huge national budget of over a trillion dollars, the stakes are too high. The common man is silently watching the list of such aspirants, while alongside there is infighting and lust for power. The ballot box will deliver a final verdict in a couple of months

Continued from page 3

from now. Let Election 2009 decide what kind of leader the country needs. It is high time we learn from Obama and the way the electorate rallied around him. One word, "change", transformed the entire scenario. Sadly, the saffron Singh and Advani do not seem concerned about change.
R Ravi Kumar, Hyderabad

We find your magazine to be of great value to the students of our vidyalaya.
L Horam, Principal, JNV Nafra, West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh

I am a journalist and I must say that till today I have never come across such an informative magazine as *gfiles* (online) which reveals the inside workings of the government to all.
Santosh, via email

I am an Indian Police Service officer, Nagaland Cadre/51 RR/1998 currently posted as SP, Kohima. I have never figured in the Tracking or Birthdays columns. Can you kindly clarify why?
Renchamo P Kikon, SP, Kohima, Nagaland

There is limited space in the magazine but the complete list appears on www.indianbuzz.com — Editor

gfiles, true to its title, has become a must-read journal and an essential reference point for issues related to government and governance. But the January 2009 issue is a huge disappointment. Your editorial only reflects popular sentiment, generalizes the issue and heavily leans on the views of Arun Shourie – known for his prejudices. Then there is a letter from a Shimla-based "senior journalist" who wants us to know how he made the entire staff of a particular District Magistrate's office rise to their feet. One wonders if we should do away with the institution of the DM and let the Chief Secretary run the state administration with the help of such wonderful mediapersons. The edited extracts from the autobiography of G Sundaram also tell us nothing more than his quarrels with fellow bureaucrats, betraying a sense of self-importance. The only piece I liked is the one on intelligence cooperation by RV Sharada Prasad.
Lalit Surjan, Chief Editor, Deshbandhu, *Raipur*

Continued from page 2

inter-governmental agreement was signed in 2008 between India and Russia. The designated agencies are engaged in discussions. The upgrade of the entire fleet of AN-32s is likely to commence very soon. It will undergo a very comprehensive refit, which will give it enhanced capabilities and a new lease of life.

gfiles: *What is the UAV acquisition roadmap? Will more numbers be acquired by IAF or will they go to the Navy and Army? How much are BEL and others involved in transfer of technology for better UAV payloads? Are there plans for HALE UAVs as well as Rotary UAVs?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The UAVs are very versatile aerial platforms and additional platforms and payloads of various capabilities are being acquired by the IAF in requisite numbers in accordance with our overall plans. The involvement of our defence PSUs in this sphere is gaining momentum, especially with regard to the Rotary UAVs.

gfiles: *What has been accomplished by the Red Flag 2008 exercise in terms of interoperability? Now that you have said further participation will be selective, will you participate in the transport Rodeo exercise?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: Red Flag provided us with a tremendous opportunity to deploy a sizeable combat complement across the world for more than two months. The message that this deployment conveys is obvious. Whilst operating in a complex multi-national exercise with some very reputed air forces, we also got an opportunity to test our skills and exchange best practices with them. We were able to operate together and fly operational missions in a near-realistic environment. International exercises are an expensive proposition and that is why we are selective. Decisions to participate in multi-lateral exercises are taken on a case-to-case basis.

gfiles: *What is the time schedule for the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft*

'Red Flag provided us with a tremendous opportunity to deploy a sizeable combat complement across the world for more than two months.....We also got an opportunity to test our skills and exchange best practices with them'

(MMRCA) as per the DPP-2008? When will the flight trials commence and will all six applicants be participating? Where will the flying trials and weapon trials be held?

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The technical evaluation of the proposals is in the final stages. Flight trials will commence shortly. These trials will be conducted in three phases. The first phase will be conducted at the location of the vendor. Thereafter, the aircraft will be brought to India and evaluated under Indian conditions. In the third phase, the aircraft would be evaluated for weapons and systems, at the location of the vendor.

gfiles: *What is the status of the Mirage upgrade and what will it involve?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The final stages of contract negotiations are underway and the project of upgrading the Mirage-2000 should commence soon. The upgrade involves equipping the present aircraft with a completely new set of sensors, avionics and weapons to enhance operational relevance for present and futuristic air war fighting.

'We have laid out a fibre-optic network, AFNET, to link all Air Force users. The Integrated Air Command and Control System will ride over this network.....All sensors and combat assets will be integrated'

gfiles: *Have the glitches in the Hawk been removed? What is the present status?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: The Hawk programme is progressing well. Flying training on the Hawk has commenced. The second batch of pilots has commenced flying training. We have received all aircraft from BAE Systems, as planned. The delivery of HAL Hawks has fallen a bit behind schedule. There were a few glitches during the period of initial induction of the aircraft but with active involvement at the highest levels, most of the issues have been addressed, and the system has now stabilized.

gfiles: *Is the IAF involved in acquisition of new engines of LCA by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: A Joint Engine Evaluation Team with members from HAL, IAF, Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness (RCMA) and ADA has been set up to evaluate the new engine for the LCA. The IAF is very actively involved in the entire process.

gfiles: *What is the status of the space-based surveillance? What about an Aerospace Command?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: Space-based assets provide us with great operational advantages in many areas. At the moment, we don't have any pure military asset to provide us such a capability. We obtain data from commercial assets which are already in space. The establishment of an Aerospace Command is an evolving concept. At the moment, we have a system in place wherein individual service requirements from space are consolidated at the Integrated Space Cell (ISC) under HQ IDS. The IAF has established a dedicated sub-branch at Air HQ, headed by an Air Vice Marshal, to look after all aspects concerned with the exploitation of space.

gfiles: *What's been achieved in acquiring network-centric warfare capabilities?*

Air Chief Marshal FHM: Networking our sensors, combat platforms and command and control systems creates a force-multiplier effect that can dramatically increase our operational effectiveness. It is our intention to integrate all our assets on a common architecture. We have laid out a fibre-optic network called AFNET to link all Air Force users.

The Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) will ride over this network. Coupled with the Operational Data Link (ODL), all our sensors and combat assets will be integrated, thus reducing our decision cycles and making the conduct of aerospace operations more responsive and effective. The physical component is in place and we expect the IACCS to be up and running in a short time from now. g

'There has been some delay in the arrival of the AWACS. I now expect it to be with us in late February/March. This is not a readily available "commercially off the shelf" (COTS) purchase. It is a project of immense complexity, involving a number of players'

Tough taskmaster
chidambaram means business

NORTH Block is awash with the buzz that Home Minister P Chidambaram's no-nonsense attitude cannot be countered. This was learnt the hard way by a high-ranking IPS officer from the Kerala cadre, who recently became Special Secretary (Internal Security). The poor man simply went to pay a courtesy call on Chidambaram, and was given 36 hours to read files and catch up on the internal security scenario before coming again to brief the Minister.

No sooner had the 36 hours lapsed, the Special Secretary got a telephone call from Chidambaram himself, asking him to come over for a briefing. Needless to say, the officer had to burn the midnight oil before the appointment with the Minister.

In another instance, Chidambaram flew to Raipur on January 19 for a review meeting of the unified command as Chhattisgarh is one of the states worst affected by Naxal violence. While there, he minced no words in delivering his message to the Maoist cadre – nobody in a democratic set-up can aspire to power by the gun.

Birthday gaffe
up minister's slip

WHEN Mayawati shrugged off accusations that her partymen had forcefully collected money from bureaucrats and businessmen for her birthday – simply saying that party workers had doubled their financial contribution this year – it provided a cue to her seniormost Minister, Nasimuddin Siddiqui, to repeat her statement during a speech to party workers on the birthday.

However, in a bad slip of the tongue, Siddiqui said, "*Iss baar Behenji ke janam din par party karyakartaon ne doguna chanda vasool kar diya hai* (this time party workers raised double collection by extortion)." Realizing his mistake immediately, he hastened to clarify, "*Vasoolne se mera matlab hai ki aapsi sahyog se ikattha kiya hai* (by that I mean they have mutually contributed)." He went on to explain that protests by other political parties had motivated the BSP workers to contribute more.

For the babus, though, this year's birthday celebration was an utter disappointment. Since simplicity was the order of the day, there was no way they could display their proximity to her. Last year, the Director General of Police, in full official regalia, had fed a piece of cake to Mayawati while others, including the Cabinet Secretary and Chief Secretary, sang "Happy Birthday". This time, both cake and singing were missing at 5 Kalidas Marg. Dressed in their best suits and holding bouquets, UP's bureaucrats stood waiting for her at the appointed hour. When she arrived, the officers were seen vying with one another to be the first to wish her. And guess what most of the bouquets were composed of? Blue orchids! Long live sycophancy!

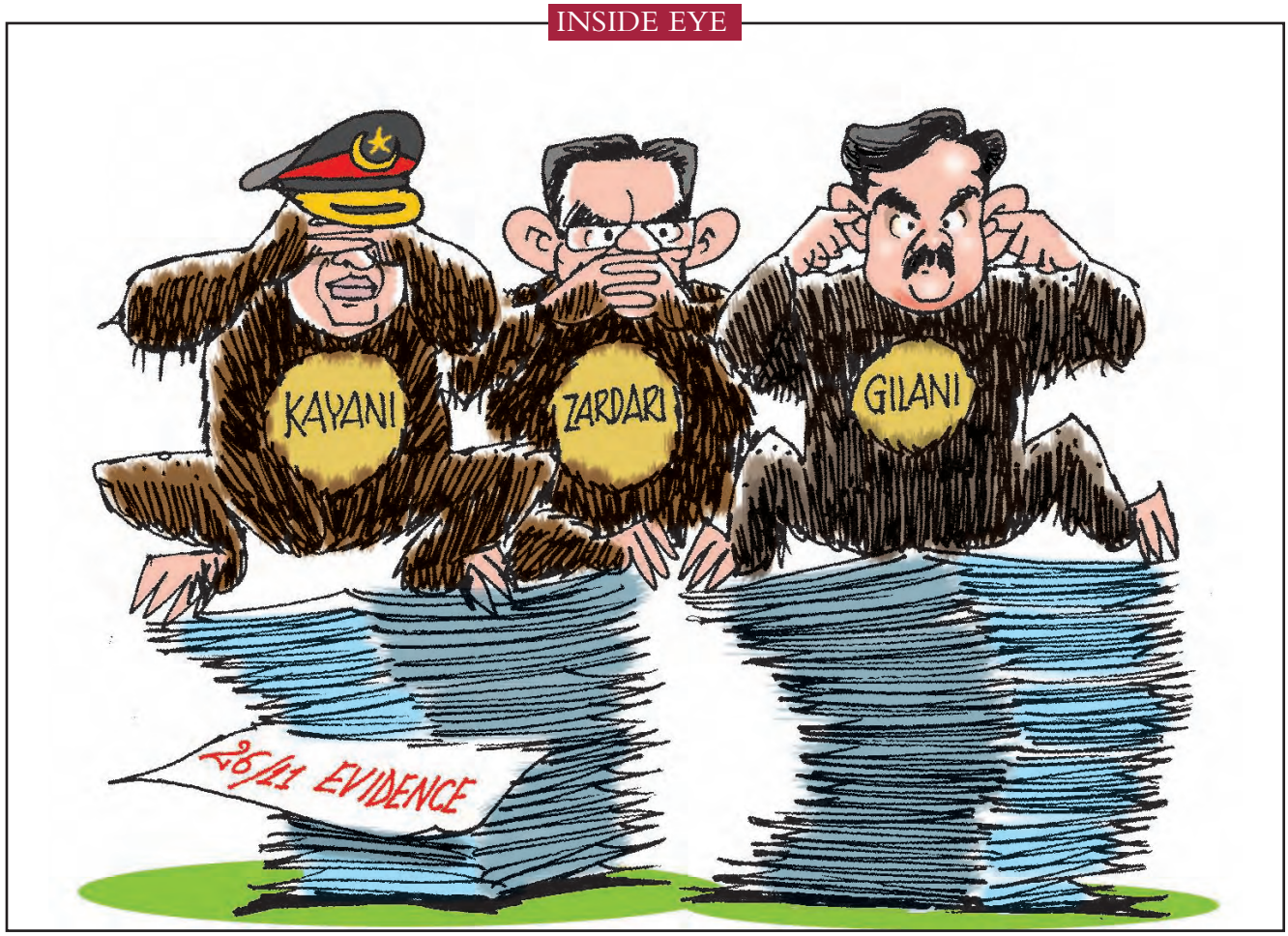
Tiwari ire on show
jibe at patil

THE octogenarian Governor of Andhra Pradesh, ND Tiwari, made a shocking display of frustration while speaking at a function marking the golden jubilee of the National Institute of Rural Development at Hyderabad on December 30. He vented his feelings against none other than President Pratibha Patil, who was present, to the undying embarrassment of other dignitaries – including Union Minister for Rural Development Raghuvansh Prasad Singh.

Tiwari had hoped to get the Presidentship of India and, when Congress president Sonia Gandhi, for political reasons, chose Patil, he has since harboured a grudge against her. At the function, he praised – or ridiculed – Patil as a good cook and said that Rashtrapati Bhavan was now becoming famous for its hospitality. He added that her husband is a farmer (which he is not).

Patil maintained her com-

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA



posure and humility, but the audience was left wondering why the state has been saddled with Tiwari, whose health does not permit him to stand on his own and who trembles while speaking, sometimes incoherently.

'Mad Mulayam' moves anger muslims

IS Mulayam Singh Yadav bent on committing hara-kiri in UP on the eve of the general election? He's up against Mayawati who is mega-planning a first-time entry into Delhi. But the Yadav chieftain, whose deft combining of the state's Muslim-Yadav vote bank has produced stunning electoral victories in the past, has made weird decisions. First, he alienated his new Congress friends – without whom fighting Mayawati will be difficult – by unilaterally declaring Samajwadi Party tickets despite his seat adjustment commitment. Then he welcomed BJP stalwart Kalyan Singh into his fold, to the horror of Muslim supporters who remember Kalyan as the hardline Hindutva CM during whose regime the Babri Masjid was demolished. One fallout of that 1992 demolition was that Congress MP Salim Sherwani, a Rajiv Gandhi associate, switched to the SP. Sherwani, an industrialist and a modernist with a clean image, has since been SP's winning candidate from Badaun. As a sitting MP, he was expecting his ticket again – to face the notorious DP Yadav, being backed by Mayawati. Mulayam asked Sherwani to start preparing for the election but finally gave the ticket to his own nephew. Mulayam told Sherwani, "Can't you make a sacrifice for my family?" to which Sherwani replied: "I thought I was part of your family."

Mulayam offered him Etah and Allahabad but Sherwani has decided to go it alone despite a Congress feeler. Muslims in Badaun and the Rohilkhand division have taken out massive processions in a show of solidarity for Sherwani. One Muslim leader remarked: "*Vinash kaale, vipreet buddhi* (Those whom the gods destroy, they first make mad)." g

jaswant singh

THE BIGGEST SHOW TAKES OFF

Over 40 countries are sending delegations to the seventh edition of the Aero Show

AERO India 2009, at Bangalore over February 11-15, is the seventh edition of the Aero India exhibitions which started in 1996. The seventh show is expected to be even bigger than the sixth show which was almost 70 per cent larger in terms of area and participation than the previous show. The growth in Aero India in 2007 and 2009 can be attributed to the overall economic growth of the country, global recognition of India as an important player in the world scenario, the increasing strength of Indian industry, the modernization plan of the armed forces and offset provisions.

Aero India is one of the most important air shows in this part of the world and provides an excellent opportunity for viewing the latest in aeronautical and aerospace systems. Over 600 companies, including around 300 firms from about 25 countries, will be displaying their range of products and technologies. We will also have five country pavilions. I would like to emphasize that the growth is more than 20 per cent over the last show despite the global recession having set in. Aero India is also a forum for interaction of important dignitaries and decisionmakers from different parts of the world. More than 40 countries have confirmed that they will be sending official delegations, including 15 ministerial delegations.

Aero India 2007 registered 70% growth over its predecessor

What makes an aero show different from any other exhibition is the static as well as dynamic display of crafts. We are going to have participation from the US, Europe and Russia for both static and dynamic displays. These displays make the aero show extremely attractive to the general public also. I expect large participation by the public in viewing these displays from a special area made for the public, viz., Air Display Viewing Area (ADVA).

I would also like to mention the new initiatives of Aero India 2009. We have introduced web-based interface for scheduling B2B meetings. Our website, www.aeroindia.in, has got an excellent response – resulting in over 275,000 hits so far. You will appreciate that, for a business portal, it is quite a substantial number. Further, we have participation from IIT Chennai, IIT Powai and some other institutions which will exhibit student-based projects on space. We are also going to invite students from various schools in Bangalore and explain various fields of aviation and the aviation industry.

The most important aspect of Aero India 2009 is going to be vastly improved infrastructure of the show which you will see to be of international standard. I expect that the Confederation of Indian Industries, our event manager, will use its knowledge base to make the event the best Aero Show in Asia. g

The writer is Minister of State for Defence Production

Over 600 companies, including 300 firms from 25 countries, will be displaying their products and technologies....The growth is more than 20 per cent over the last show despite the global recession having set in

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STARVED FOR A

The absence of a strategic culture hamstrings

THE Indian armed forces' air defence capability is insufficient to meet all threats from the air. It is skewed towards the western border. Other areas do not have adequate air defence resources to provide desired levels of protection. This is due to an absence of strategic culture in our country and the reluctance of decisionmakers to invest national resources in acquiring assets that have no visible impact on "progress" or "development" of the country at large.

The fallacy of such a view, flowing from the fundamental misconception that national security is separate from national development, is driven home only when events like 26/11 jolt the nation.

"Air defence" is protection of Indian airspace, territories and territorial waters against hostile air action during both peace and war. During peace, air defence ensures that air activity in Indian airspace conforms to the laws of the land. During war, it aims to sustain national will by securing our strategic and military capability and preventing hostile air power from inflicting damage on India's war-waging apparatus. Pre-emption or destroying enemy air power in enemy territory before it can be employed against us could be described as "offensive air defence".

Air defence is highly time-critical due to the speeds at which modern fighter aircraft are capable of flying. Strike aircraft fly at 900 kmph or 15 km in a minute. That works out to a km every 4 seconds. Therefore an air defence element 45 km inside our border would have only 3 minutes to react to an ingressing hostile strike aeroplane in that vicinity. Actually, with stand-off weapon availability, the time to take action is even lesser. In this short time the hostile ingress has to be detected, identified, intercepted and destroyed.

The air defence system has radars of various types for detection purposes, a friend-or-foe identification process, interceptor aircraft with air-to-air missiles, quick reaction surface-to-air missiles (SAM) or air defence artillery to intercept and destroy the threat. Hostilities complicate this entire process as our own friendly aircraft proceed for attacking enemy targets and on return must be clearly differentiated from enemy aircraft so that fratricide is avoided.

These functions are carried out by the Indian Air Force which among the armed forces is primarily responsible for the entire air defence of the country. The Indian Army too has radars, air defence artillery (ADA) guns and missiles to provide organic air defence to strike corps, holding corps and some other national resources during operations. Similarly, Indian Naval ships have "on board" air defence assets to ward off hostile air threats at sea.

The air defence system in India is organized to optimize use of all available resources of radars, communication systems, aircraft, SAMs and ADA to provide effective defence to our vital areas (VA) and vital points(VP) and other national resources critical to our war effort. India is divided into air defence regions in which responsibilities are clearly delegated. Ideally, integration between regions should be seamless and radar cover overlapping to provide continuity to air defence operations. Inadequacy in numbers of air defence radars with secure communication links does not permit this at present.

Air Headquarters is the apex body. Under Air HQ are the five operational commands with delineated regions over which they have authority. Both Air HQ and command headquarters are resource-providing agencies which are kept "in the loop" of air defence activities in real-time through video-streaming of the air defence picture.

Air defence is controlled by direction centres (ADDC) located in the command regions. Detection of ingress by hostile aircraft is carried out by the early warning radar stations under each ADDC or by the personnel of mobile observation flights who are deployed at the border or line of control. Decision to get interceptor aircraft airborne or to alert the SAM units is taken by the ADDC .

Air HQ and commands have veto powers. In an ideal situation, radars belonging to the Army, Navy and civil aviation in each region should be integrated, so that a regional radar picture is available at each command and a comprehensive radar picture at Air HQ. Currently, such integration is possible only in a few areas.

The ADDC has a high power radar (HPR) to monitor the airspace in its area of responsibility. Most of the IAF's HPRs are old and need to be replaced. In the last few

Akash air defence: more needed

It speaks volumes about our governance that SAC, even today, remains starved of assets like fighter compatible runways, HPRs, SAM units or permanently stationed fighter units to meet the challenges

ASSETS

s credible deterrence

years, the IAF has acquired two aerostat radars from abroad and more are expected. Except for these, which are in addition to the existing HPRs and deployed in regions bordering our western neighbour, none others are on order. The problem is acute in the Indian peninsular region which does not have a single HPR.

In 1984 the Southern Air Command (SAC) was created with the specific objective of providing air defence cover to the burgeoning strategic assets in the south. It speaks volumes about our governance that SAC, even today, remains starved of assets like fighter compatible runways, HPRs, SAM units or permanently stationed fighter units to meet the challenges that have grown exponentially.

No HPR has been established in this region and when the LTTE air wing began its operations against the Sri Lankan airbases, the IAF had to pull out some of its Indra 2 radars from the northern sector and deploy them in coastal areas opposite Sri Lanka. This move was to shore up public confidence, as detection capability on a limited scale without a complementary ability to intercept and destroy, does not have much operational relevance.

The need to move radars from one area to another demonstrates the mobility of air defence assets in particular and of air power in general, but also indicates a weakness that we do not have enough assets to provide air defence to cover many areas where threats may develop. In a situation of scarce air defence resources, removing assets from one sector to another means creation of gaps in the sector from which radars have been moved out. It is not as if this problem has not been projected to the decisionmakers.

The IAF has for long maintained that a two-front force strength, to meet simultaneous challenges from China and Pakistan, is a necessity for credible deterrence. But in our traditional and bureaucratically less contentious methodology of defence budget allocation, a focussed joint services approach to military hardware requirements for strengthening national security is difficult to achieve. There is a time-honoured way of allocation of resources, which could be tweaked here and there, but never altered significantly to meet emerging challenges. This often results in wasteful expenditure.

A case in point is acquisition of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) by the Air Force, Army and Navy with each service entering into different contracts with the same vendor and losing out on the advantages of joint pressure to beat down costs of acquisition, maintenance infrastructure, spares and training. The absence of a single-point authority for defence acquisitions, based on a joint appreciation of threats and capabilities required, will continue to sub-optimize our military purchases.

China has already built up a formidable long-range air strike capability and our border issues with that country are far from resolution. But in our airbases in the Northeast, only rudimentary air defence resources are available. The IAF needs to strengthen its detection capability in that sector along with deployment of modern fighter aircraft like the Su-30. SAM units have to be located at major airbases and MOFs have to get familiar with the terrain and communications in the area.

BUT on the ground the situation is different. Our radars are ageing and need replacement. Our SAM units of Soviet/Russian vintage are dwindling in number and new flights ordered from Israel will barely suffice for the currently heated up western sector. New MOFs cannot be raised because of a ban on manpower increase. There is an urgent need to re-assess our air defence resource requirements and acquire these.

It is nobody's case that only air defence has to be strengthened. The Army and Navy have their list of deficiencies and accretions based on their threat perceptions. What is needed now is positive governance and a futuristic approach to capability-building.

The time has come for India to abandon its archaic approach to military acquisitions, dogged by accusations of kickbacks and underhand dealings. There is a need to look at military capability-building based on what the nation and its security imperatives demand at the cost that the individual service asks for. The priorities have to be jointly decided and acted upon. It is said that nations usually prepare for the last war fought. We need to get out of that mindset and prepare to deal with future threats which are bound to be more complex and challenging. The military must keep a keen eye on our neighbourhood while honing its capabilities. And decisionmakers must ensure that visionary governance transcends all but national interests. g

The writer is a former fighter pilot who flew 17 missions in the 1971 war

The IAF needs to strengthen its detection capability in the Northeast along with deployment of modern fighter aircraft like the Su-30. SAM units have to be located at major airbases

A DECADE OF LOST OPPORTUNITIES

Our archaic bureaucratic approach to managing national defence research and production must make way for a corporate-type mission-oriented model

IT is typical of the Indian security system that only in times of security crises does the nation wake up to the gross weaknesses in re-equipping of the armed forces. Recall the Kargil conflict, when the Army Chief was obliged to lament at a press conference that the Army would have to fight with whatever it had! As the post-Mumbai terrorist attack security scenario worsened, the rapidly depleting combat force strength of the IAF and its inadequate assets of air defence radars – on which even the Auditor General's report has been less than flattering – was thrown into relief. It was left to an erstwhile Air Chief to pour cold water over brave talk of coercive diplomacy: "When your defences are weak, what are you going to coerce with?" In a nutshell, this has been India's historical track record of defence preparedness rooted primarily in its archaic higher defence management system where responsibility and accountability are far removed.

Aviation and space are the most significant technological influences of our times. Technological changes are altering the face of conventional warfare so completely that weapon systems, forces and budgets that were relevant to old military planning and doctrines are rapidly becoming obsolete. The resulting revolution in military affairs demands not an evolutionary change, but a

Our defence research and production establishment was neither geared towards working with the private sector nor to delivering in a fiercely competitive environment

SHARAD SAXENA

One step forward, two back

IN fairness, some progressive steps towards streamlining defence procurement were initiated when a Defence Acquisition Council under the Defence Minister and associated organizational changes were put in place. Defence production was opened to the private sector with a 26 per cent FDI cap and a comprehensive Defence Procurement Policy (DPP) and Manual were issued in 2005 and subsequently updated. A major initiative in the DPP was the obligation of suppliers to a direct offset of 30 per cent on contracts worth over Rs 300 crore.

While these were welcome conceptual steps towards change, our security managers failed to recognize that the mindset of our defence research and production establishment was based on working as a department of the government. It was neither geared towards working with the private sector nor to delivering in a fiercely competitive and high technology international aerospace environment. This mindset needed concrete steps to usher in change. The private sector had been kept out of defence and therefore needed considerable encouragement and support to rise to the challenge. Offsets needed to be used as tools to make the Indian aerospace industry a serious international competitor in the longer term with technology rather than commerce as its primary focus. Weaving all these threads into an achievable strategic plan needed a whole new approach. This has been lacking and it appears that formulating an ideal Defence Procurement Policy has become an end in itself rather than a mere means.

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well-conceived transformation of how security is managed, organized and executed.

Managing these complexities needs leadership at every level that is informed about these issues, is accountable for results and is committed to transformation. A leadership that is willing to discard old ideas, philosophies and prejudices and look at innovative solutions to new technological challenges. In short, our archaic bureaucratic approach to managing national defence research and production must make way for a corporate-type mission-oriented model.

AIR power constitutes not just the military components but also a rapidly growing civil aviation industry, the supporting infrastructure to keep this high technology industry well oiled, and the R&D and industrial base that will be the foundation on which national air power will be sustained. Thanks to a strong base in the country, aeronautics also has the potential to be a generator of wealth, provided a cohesive national policy covering both civil and military sectors is drawn and institutions established and made accountable to execute this policy.

Some years ago the Aeronautics Society of India had put up a comprehensive proposal in this regard. An essential component of this reorganization plan was to model it on the Departments of Atomic Energy and Space, both of which have demonstrated that in a high technology field, India can achieve self sufficiency, success and export provided proper management models are put in place. It was hoped that because there was a precedent of this model in governance, bureaucratic resistance would be minimal. This hope lies belied and Indian aerospace continues to be denied this opportunity.

Consequently, despite a national policy of self-reliance, vast investments already made across R&D, and production and high quality research and engineering human resource availability, India continues to depend largely on imports in the aeronautics sector. This has a direct bearing on national security and discourages scientific and technical talent. The nation is denied the opportunity to create wealth which in turn will strengthen aerospace R&D and production, and enhance security.

Air power constitutes not just the military components but also a rapidly growing civil aviation industry to keep this high technology industry well oiled

For over a decade, we have been on the threshold of a great opportunity. In the military field technology is the driving factor and within the military, aerospace more so. Our sole aim must be to achieve, through private-public partnership, focused R&D, and effective offset programmes, capabilities that will enable our aerospace industry to become an international player within a defined time-frame. This needs a national aerospace policy driven by an Aerospace Commission tasked with a clearly defined mission. We have the technical and human resources to achieve this, but lack the political will.

In this context, writing in a defence journal on the eve of Aero India 1998, this writer had said, "Indian government needs to recognize that India has to define its own unique structure and then introduce institutional reforms. Time is of essence. Aero India 1998 is an appropriate milestone for the beginning of this exciting journey such that when Aero India 2000 heralds the new millennium, Indian aerospace industry will be well on the path of reorganization, reconstruction and a focused future. Only then can events as Aero India become meaningful trade promotional activities towards benefiting Indian aerospace. For the present they mean little." g

The writer is a former fighter pilot who served as AOC-in-C, South Western Air Command

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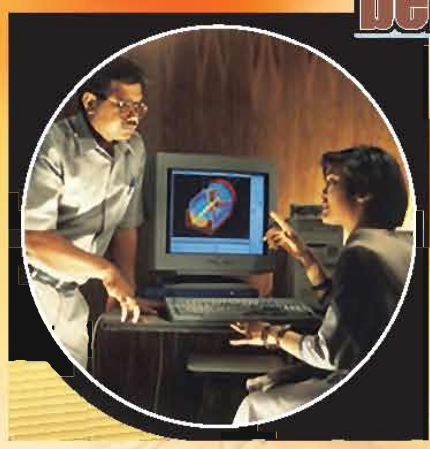

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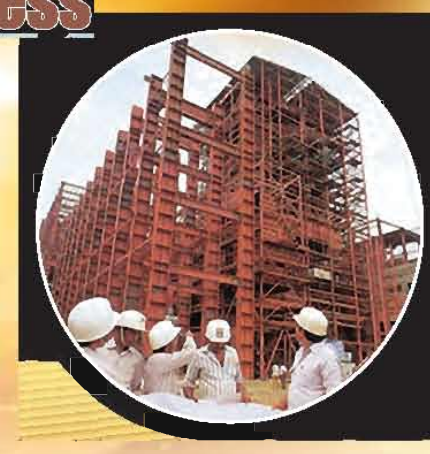

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SAFEGUARDING THE

The effective use of space for both civilian and military pu

SPACE assets have indeed transformed our world and the way we live. The moon is now eminently reachable. Cyber warfare using space assets, star wars and space warfare are no longer science fiction. Our reliance on space has been accelerating. There is a host of civilian and military applications that are acutely dependent on our access to space and the list is becoming longer.

Such dependence increases our vulnerabilities as well. Successful interference in our use of space could adversely impact both civilian and military requirements, and capabilities. The safeguarding of our space assets is the axiomatic responsibility of the military, but, particularly in the case of India, military capabilities largely ride piggyback on civilian space assets. Hence, an effective formal and informal system of interaction amongst the users of space assets is unavoidable.

However, the users and the potential users of space assets are many and their requirements are increasing. Unfortunately, money supply will always be a constraint and some form of prioritization is essential. What should be avoided is to proportionately allot funds and capabilities without taking a view of the utility of the capability in national interest. More important, all this has to be done with the minimum of rancour and, hopefully, a plan could emerge that would satisfy all or at least most of the users. The exercise has to be repeated periodically with changing demands and technical advancements.

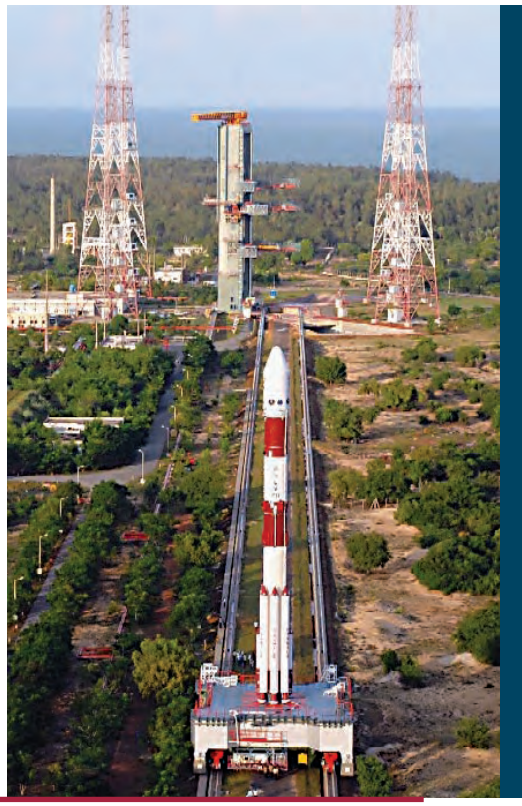
Many technological transformations in the use of space assets are on the cards. It will be useful if some of these advancements could be brought about with international collaboration and coordination but many more will have to be based on indigenous technology and expertise. This is another area where informed decisions will have to be taken to satisfy the users. Where should the responsibility lie? Who will decide the more promising areas of research and the more significant aspects of research? Clear-cut devolution of authority, with concomitant responsibility and accountability, is needed.

Apart from better metals and alloys, higher sensitivities of sensors, and many other technological advances, the three major areas where transformations are most likely to occur in the near future are miniaturization, data processing and communications. Considerable scientific acumen has to be garnered for each of these areas individually and in their integration thereafter. The aim is to improve the products of space for increasing efficiency in our functioning and to seek more areas where space can be used to advantage.

Miniaturization implies much more than decreasing the size of satellites and the operationalization of mini, milli and micro satellites. Far more important, there is the essential requirement of manufacturing smaller and smaller sensors and associated equipment with equal if not added capability. The object must be to have the capability to launch satellites to serve the desired purpose(s) at very short notice and thereby ensure redundancy. As the cost of satellites is a function of weight, the smaller satellites should be less expensive and require smaller and cheaper launchers. It should also be possible to launch many satellites at the same time, indeed even a swarm of satellites, on the same launcher, thereby increasing redundancy still further. Progressively, it should be our endeavour to reduce the time to launch from days to hours to, hopefully, minutes. Another question that must be addressed is the operational utilization of the different classes of small satellites and the agency to authorize their launch.

The commercial aspects of space and the huge profits to be made will inevitably lead to even greater competition than at present

Communications, including data links, are what permit the utilization of information garnered from satellites. With expansion in the number of users, the bandwidth requirements will increase. Methods will be needed to increase the bandwidth and the hunger for more bandwidth will increase rapidly as the utility of space assets manifests itself to an increasing extent. Compression techniques, the use of higher frequencies and other means to permit optimum utilization of our assets in tune with user requirements will be necessary. Which agency should be authorized to plan the future requirements, ration the bandwidth and decide on areas of research and development? Once again, such questions need continuous study and urgent answers.



E FINAL FRONTIER

purposes requires multi-pronged management

Data processing is the third area of transformation that should make the utilization of space assets more effective. So far, the predictions of Moore's Law of the progressive increase in computing power are being met and usable Artificial Intelligence could become a reality in the near to medium term. Increased computing power will immeasurably increase the utility and utilization of information accessed from space. Research and Development in this field is essential as it is already attracting competition.

IN the keynote address at the last Global Space Technology Forum Conference, it was estimated that the combined civilian and military spending for space was $50 billion in 2007. The figure related to only governmental expenditure. The actual value of space assets would be in some hundreds of billions of dollars. Private enterprise has also entered the space market in a big way. For instance, the competition for the Google Lunar X Prize is gathering. It is a competion with $30 million in prize money for the first privately funded team to send a robot to the moon, make it travel at least 500 m on the moon's surface and transmit video images and data back to earth. The prize will probably be claimed sooner rather than later.

The interest shown by non-government agencies clearly shows the commercial potential of space. As late as December 23, 2008, Space Exploration Technologies won a NASA contract to supply 20,000 kg of cargo to the International Space Station for $1.6 billion. As the space shuttle has been retired, contracts for an additional $3.1 billion are imminent. The adventure aspect of space travel, where many space enthusiasts are willing to pay good money to merely travel to space, has been overtaken by hard commercial interests.

The commercial aspects of space and the huge profits to be made will inevitably lead to even greater competition than at present. It is also a truism that conflict always follows commerce. At the same time, the reliance of the military on space facilities in peace and even more so in war is increasing. The very promising system of Net Centric Warfare is but one aspect of the military use of space. Attempts to curb the adversary's use of space assets can have a salutary impact in war. Offensive and defensive capabilities are needed and again, different types of expertise are required to support military needs. Programming, stipulation of protocols on use and the manner of use, and the optimum utilization of funds are other areas that have to be monitored. Such tasks cannot be left to individual services and the creation of a Space Command is overdue. The requirement has been felt for some time and it was first mooted many years ago. g

The writer was Vice Chief of Air Staff

Command and control

Space Commission and Space Command cannot operate as mutually exclusive entities. Space Command has to be given some distinct areas of sole responsibilities but in the optimum use of space assets, no agency should be viewed as totally independent. The establishment of the two new recommended agencies will certainly make our planning and utilization of space far more effective but caution is in order. Organizations are intended to serve and not become an end unto themselves. Clear checks and balances must be introduced and ensured. Creation of organizations or their expansion as a means to provide some functionaries with the "loaves and fishes of office" must be diligently avoided.

Needed: A new vision

SPACE capabilities are much too important to be given anything less than very high priority. They should be viewed as national assets and the first requirement must be to formulate a "vision for use of space". At present, there is only an informal system for optimum utilization of space. ISRO and Dept of Space have done commendable work but, as space users and their requirements increase, it will be necessary to have an organization like a Space Commission to oversee all aspects of space and its exploitation. We must resort to a multi-disciplinary approach with representation from all major users of space.

The organization should encompass, inter alia, expertise in the realm of satellite construction, manufacture and integration of sensors, research and development, assessment of future needs, attempts at international collaboration, planning, programming, prioritization, training, education, and assessing the impact of inimical interference in our use of space. With military use of space, militarization, and weaponization of space no longer mere terms, experts will be needed to represent us in international bodies and deliberations on the inevitable sequels to "The Outer Space Treaty" and PAROS, and the like. Commercial use of space, colonization of the moon, and the implications of use of space for National Missile Defence are other areas where domain expertise is essential.

The entire ambit of space capabilities represents a multi-agency endeavour and continuous efforts are needed to better manage the national security space enterprise. Major and many-pronged initiatives are needed and we must ensure that by reasoned collaborative effort, the highly advantageous synergy is created and maintained. It will probably be necessary to nominate specific agencies to be the lead agencies for different aspects of space exploitation. Our challenge is to find ways to streamline and strengthen interagency governance of the space enterprise.

Waste not, Want

The Pay Commission proffers a solution to the twin problems of shortage of officers and r

by Maj-Gen Mrinal Suman

NO other pay commission has come under so much attack from the armed forces as the Sixth Central Pay Commission (CPC). They appear convinced that the members of the CPC were handpicked for their anti-services bias! "Not one member had any relation or progeny in the services. Their knowledge of the military is limited to what is displayed during the Republic Day Parade," is a common refrain. According to a veteran, "The services should have anticipated such a deal. In a country where the Finance Minister (an ex-bureaucrat) expresses his inability to spend a few crores on soldiers while writing off thousands of crores of farmers' loans, the military should learn to be thankful for whatever crumbs are thrown at it."

Many feel that the members of every pay commission should be made to stay on the Siachen glacier for a week to get a true feel of the Army's hardships prior to finalizing their recommendations. An email making the rounds is indicative of the despondency prevailing among soldiers reads, "ISI and all other entities inimical to India have passed a resolution thanking Indian Pay Commission for achieving in one stroke what they have been unsuccessfully trying to achieve for decades – demoralization of the Indian armed forces."

Notwithstanding the general disenchantment with its apparent anti-military bias, the CPC deserves credit for proposing an extremely viable scheme to help the services overcome the twin problems of shortage of officers and resettlement of ex-servicemen. Both problems are acute and have been defying solution. Currently, the Indian Army faces a shortage of over 11,000 officers, close to 24 per cent of its authorization of 46,615 officers. The other two services face a similar problem. The only solution lies in making Short Service Commission (SSC) attractive. At present, an adequate number of suitable candidates do not apply for SSC due to their sense of insecurity about future prospects. They fear that failure to get Permanent Commission will make them jobless in the prime of their lives with full family responsibilities to boot. As regards resettlement of ex-servicemen, over 40,000 young, trained and disciplined soldiers are released from the defence forces every year. The government has to bear a huge pension bill while this large pool of highly skilled manpower is lost to the country without being put to any productive use.

The CPC rightly recognized that only an assured second career can make SSC attractive as financial packages can never compensate for short tenure of service and uncertainty about future employment. Similarly, the CPC felt that provision of alternative government service to ex-ser-

SHARAD SAXENA

Many military personnel feel that the members of every pay commission should be made to stay on the Siachen glacier for a week to get a true feel of the Army's hardships prior to finalizing their recommendations

Side-stepping of ex-servicemen

As regards side-stepping of ex-servicemen into CPO, resistance appears to be on the following grounds:

- CPO are considered personal fiefdoms of political leaders and bureaucrats of MHA. Any policy that appears to be diluting their absolute control is perceived as an unacceptable threat.
- Recruitment to CPO is a highly lucrative activity with political patronage playing an

not

resettlement of ex-servicemen

vicemen can ensure utilization of their full potential whilst reducing the pension bill. It therefore suggested a scheme of assured lateral induction of retired service personnel into suitable government organizations. The scheme is easy to implement and cannot be faulted on any count.

Induction of SSC officers was bound to be opposed both by the political leadership and CPO. The political leadership has already politicized CPO to the extent that the officers do the bidding of their political masters without a whimper of protest. Politicians fear that SSC officers may not toe their line. Having served in an apolitical environment, they may resist political pressures.

On the other hand, the officer cadre in CPO resents induction of ex-service officers as, due to their better training and experience, they make police officers feel inferior and ill-equipped. This sense of inadequacy results in petty groupism and jealousies. Also, SSC officers are liked by the rank and file due to their better man-management skills and empathy for subordinates. And SSC officers pose a threat to police officers' advancement in career because of better professional proficiency, physical fitness and operational acumen.

The MHA's opposition was along expected lines. However, what came as a big shock was the total indifference displayed by the MoD as well. Its inability to force the MHA to accept induction into CPO is understandable. However, DCO are directly under MoD. It could have made a beginning and set an example by admitting ex-servicemen in DCO. But then, MoD has always been more interested in "keeping the armed forces in their place" rather than looking after their welfare. It is incongruous that the MoD wants other organizations (including in the private sector) to provide employment to ex-servicemen but refuses to accept them in organizations under its direct control.

In view of the new threats emerging, there is an emergent need to improve the quality of CPO. Induction of ex-servicemen, both at officer and subordinate levels, with long experience of fighting terrorism and insurgency will prove to be of immense value to CPO. It will also bring in much-needed professionalism.

As is obvious, the scheme has been rejected to protect fiefdoms. As lateral induction is construed as a threat, the decisionmakers are not ready to consider it seriously. No reasons have been made public for its rejection. Selfishness has been the bane of Indian governance. Every proposal is evaluated on the basis of personal benefits accruing to the decisionmakers. National interests mean little. Subordination of personal interests to national interests requires rare vision and altruism. It is not a trait prevalent among India's governing authorities. It is time political leaders and bureaucrats rise above a narrow partisan outlook to prove their concern for national security. The CPC proposal must be implemented without dilution and delay.g

important role. Lateral induction would halt it totally.

- Military training makes ex-servicemen averse to carrying out chores which are routine in CPO. Additionally, military culture imbibed by soldiers inhibits their use for partisan purposes.

PROPOSED SCHEME

DUE to similarity of functions, Central police organizations and paramilitary forces (collectively referred to as CPO) provide an ideal opportunity for optimum utilization of the training and experience of service personnel. Additionally, various defence civilian organizations (DCO) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) can also absorb suitable ex-servicemen. The total average intake of all CPO and DCO is around 35,000 annually. Thus, almost all retiring SSC officers and soldiers can be conveniently absorbed.

The CPC recommended that recruitment of soldiers should continue as hitherto under the services. Depending on the requirement of the services and the vacancy position in CPO/DCO, the service period in the defence forces could vary between 7 and 17 years. Thereafter, depending on the availability of posts, choice and medical fitness, retiring personnel should be laterally shifted to analogous posts in different CPO/DCO with protection of salary and seniority. Such lateral shift would be optional – soldiers can opt to retire with their normal pension as at present.

According to the CPC, the following major benefits would accrue from the proposed scheme:

- CPO/DCO would save over Rs 100 crore per annum currently spent on recruitment and training of personnel as they would get trained manpower.
- Servicemen would come with rich experience in anti-terrorist and counterinsurgency duties.
- The pension bill of the government would get significantly curtailed as pension would be due to the retiring servicemen only after 30/33 years of service as against 17 years of service at present. Growing cumulatively, the annual savings on this account would be to the tune of Rs 7,800 crore after 13 years.
- SSC would become more attractive with assured second career option, thereby ensuring adequate intake of officers.
- It would also help keep the age profile of the defence forces young.

The CPC sought the views of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) before finalizing its recommendations. The MHA opposed the scheme, citing frivolous reasons like the likely adverse effect on the age profile of CPO, problems regarding fixation of parity and career progression. The most ridiculous argument offered against the scheme was that soldiers are trained to kill whereas police personnel are trained to control. The CPC dismissed all these arguments as untenable. Soldiers are highly disciplined personnel and have acquitted themselves admirably in counterinsurgency operations and aided civil authority in maintenance of law and order. They have never been accused of excessive or indiscriminate use of force. The CPC considered the scheme "extremely viable, beneficial and with no real drawbacks existing in its effective implementation". It recommended its implementation in entirety without any delay.

The government rejected the scheme without making public its reasons for doing so. Even the Committee of Secretaries did not bother to examine it.

WHY IT IS N

Special laws have come in handy to make the job

by Col R Hariharan

MANAGEMENT guru Peter Drucker once said, "Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is the right things." Will the legislation enacted after the Mumbai terror attack contribute to efficiency and effectiveness in combating terrorism? I have doubts.

After spending over 14 years in the field in the unnatural world of fighting extremists, insurgents, and terrorists, or "non-state actors", I am all for an exclusive law to fight terrorists. We need it to effectively fight terrorists because they belong to a different generic order than other non-state actors. The Union Government took just three weeks after the 26/11 attack to enact the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 2008 (UAPA) and the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008 (NIA). These two significant pieces of legislation are supposed to improve the State's response to terrorism. If that was the intention, the semantics of the nomenclature of the former Act was incorrect. If the government clubs terrorist acts with other unlawful acts, the focus will not be on coming to terms with terrorism, but wishing it away.

At the same time, I am no great admirer of such laws which curtail the basic rights of citizens. Earlier governments had brought in similar laws for equally dubious reasons. These laws had not remarkably improved the state's response to violent acts of terror and insurgency. In fact, it continues to be abysmal – and that is not due to the presence or absence of counterterrorism laws. After all, IPC Section 304 has not curbed murder. The moral of the story is that laws by themselves do not improve society; their implementation does.

I have seen, from a ringside seat, the application of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 for over a decade in the Northeast. It is perhaps the longest surviving enactment of this genre. It has continued to be in force because the problem of extremism and insurgency has continued to flourish in the region. In most of the seven states there, the Army continues to be saddled with responsibilities relating more to policing than military craft.

SHARAD SAXENA

Use of the Army for such tasks has continued in the Northeast for five decades. There are no visible political or administrative strategies there to make the three limbs of government – legislature, executive and judiciary – more responsible and efficient in ensuring security of person and property for ordinary citizens. This has become a self-defeating proposition as the police has been progressively marginalized regarding some of its basic responsibilities. Unless systemic improvement takes place, states will continue to adopt the easy but inefficient option of using the Army to curb terrorism and insurgency regardless of the nature of threat. Special laws have come in handy to make the job of the state easier rather than in improving the system.

Increasing assertion of corrupt and criminal elements in the corridors of legislatures and executive, served by servile law enforcement agencies, has vitiated the rule of law. There are suspicions of such malevolent influences affecting the highest organs of the judiciary also. As a result, efficiency and accountability of the executive have taken a back seat – benefiting criminal elements that thrive in such an environment. Special laws against crime and terrorism have been taken advantage of by a nexus of corrupt politicians and bureaucracy to perpetuate the existing scheme of things.

Increasing assertion of corrupt and criminal elements in the corridors of legislatures and executive, served by servile law enforcement agencies, has vitiated the rule of law

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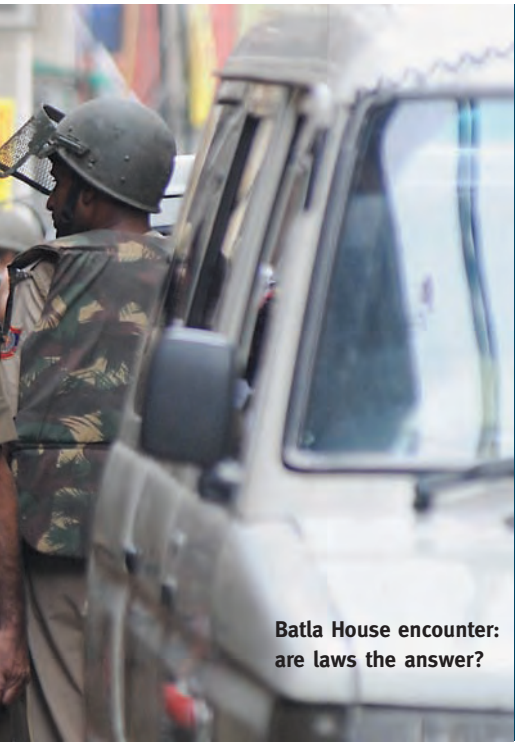
of the state easier rather than in improving the system



Batla House encounter: are laws the answer?

PAST EXPERIENCE

OUR experience with other draconian laws, some extant and some in force, like the Disturbed Areas Act, the National Security Act (NSA) of 1980, the Terrorist and Disruptive Practices (Prevention) Act (TADA), Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act of 1999 (MCOCA), and the infamous Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002 (POTA) have shown some major aberrations in their application.

The state machinery, especially in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra, has grossly misused such laws to silence political opposition or to settle personal scores. A more dangerous trend is their widespread application to pressure critical media. Unfortunately, civil society in most of the states is ineffective to check such trends. Civil society also suffers from the same political and ideological schism that permeates other institutions of society.

It will be a long haul to qualitatively improve the existing systems of administration. The physical process of going about it will require enlightened political and bureaucratic leadership to impart the will and determination needed to keep it going. At the operational level, it will involve extensive reform of the police system, an issue of great urgency that has been continuously ignored by politicians and legislatures, despite Supreme Court intervention. Updating of a whole range of obsolete laws, including the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Evidence Act, has to be taken up to meet contemporary needs. Even if the process starts now, the results will not have an immediate impact.

Terrorist bodies like the Lashkar, aided and abetted from across the border, have taken advantage of the weakness of this murky law enforcement environment to act brazenly. The State can effectively respond in the present scheme of things only if it has an efficient operative system. Special laws like the UAPA are supposed to meet this specific need. But can it really contribute to this end?

ONE can see some disturbing aspects in the UAPA. Transparency and review procedures are basic requirements for any law to fight terrorism. These are absent in the UAPA. Another aspect is the sanction to special courts to presume that the accused is guilty under certain circumstances. This is against the spirit of criminal jurisprudence in which the accused is "innocent until proven guilty". The increase of the detention period without charges from 90 to 180 days at the discretion of the court and the absence of witness protection are other troubling issues in the UAPA.

Lastly, there should have been sufficient deliberation and consultation before enacting such legislation that has far-reaching implications in the federal structure. This was pointed out in the latest Chief Ministers' conference and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reportedly indicated the possibility of making changes in the UAPA if required. Sadly, in India, deeds do not usually follow words. g

The writer is a Military Intelligence specialist with the South Asia Analysis Group

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Is PC politically

A combination of talent, ambition and circumstances propels the Chettiar

by TR RAMACHANDRAN

PALANIAPPAN Chidambaram has been forging ahead with such steam since taking over the Home Ministry after the Mumbai terrorist attack that there can no longer be an iota of doubt about his Prime Ministerial ambitions. He is not new to the Home portfolio, having handled internal security as a junior Minister under Rajiv Gandhi, and has managed to notch up some "firsts". They are significant for being clear pointers to his ambition for the top job. He took the Prime Minister's permission to summon the Army and Navy Chiefs to discuss internal security. He announced a visit to Washington for discussions with the outgoing administration, taking the MEA by surprise. The trip got cancelled as the Bush administration was in the midst of handing over charge. Chidambaram also played a part in working out the modalities of establishing the NIA, stealing a march over the BJP-led NDA which had contemplated such an organization but left it at that.

Party insiders say that the suave 63-year-old Chettiar is positioning himself as the Deputy Prime Minister without being so appointed. His qualities as an astute politician and lawyer have propelled him to great heights in barely two decades and his stint as the Union Finance Minister has been stupendous. He is highly intelligent, arrogant, austere in living habits, somewhat susceptible to the fair sex, and has an undisputed reputation for being incorruptible, a good lawyer and a tough fiscal disciplinarian.

Yet, though he has been elected to the Lok Sabha from the Sivaganga constituency no less than six times with the active backing of the DMK, he lacks a mass base. Interestingly, the only time he contested without DMK support he came a cropper. AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa's animus towards Chidambaram is well known while DMK czar M Karunanidhi's intense dislike for him is also no secret. Considering the clout of the two Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu, and with the Congress relegated to near-obscurity in the state, Chidambaram gave up visions of being Chief Minister.

Once considered a rookie in Tamil Nadu politics, he enjoyed the patronage of the late GK Moopanar (AICC General Secretary from 1981 to 1988) but, unlike his mentor, prefers being in the forefront to being a powerful behind-the-scenes player. After an MBA from Harvard Business School, he caught the attention of Rajiv Gandhi, who inducted him as Deputy Minister, Commerce and elevated him to MOS in 24 months.

Chidambaram's left-of-Centre approach has not held him back in pursuing economic reforms with vigour. As Commerce Minister in the Narasimha Rao government, he began the reforms process even before the then Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh, presented his first Budget. Within a week of taking office, he started the process of deregulation in trade and many credited him with transforming the Exim policy from an instrument of control to a driver of export growth. But, owing to the Harshad Mehta affair, he had to resign because his family owned some shares in the scam-tainted firm, Fairgrowth. Surprisingly, his resignation was accepted without fuss by Narasimha Rao.

Three years later, Chidambaram returned as Commerce Minister but, shortly before the 1996 general election, he quit the Congress to set up the TMC with Moopanar. Followers of Moopanar accuse Chidambaram of ditching his mentor when the latter came close to becoming Prime Minister in 1997. This was during the United Front government when, in a surprise move after the Left had committed a historic blunder, Jyoti Basu and Harkishen Singh Surjeet asked Moopanar to lead a Congress-supported government. Moopanar politely but expectedly declined the offer.

Subsequently, Chidambaram parted ways with Moopanar and created his own party, the Congress Janayaka Peravai. It ultimately merged with the Congress, paving the way for his homecoming and a fresh stint in the Congress-led UPA government in 2004 as Finance Minister in the Manmohan Singh Cabinet.

There was no doubt in any quarter that the reforms process would receive an added push though his 2004 Budget was nowhere reminiscent of the 1997 one which had been unanimously rated 10/10. He did not shy away from hard decisions, from giving with one hand and taking away with the other. Chidambaram was clued in on the subject and civil servants could not pull the wool over his eyes. And, to a great extent he refrained from giving in to powerful industrial lobbies. He cultivated the Left. It was clear he and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia had the backing of the Prime Minister.

To his critics in the Congress and the Dravidian parties, he is an opportunist to the core. They dismiss his Prime Ministerial ambitions categorically. First, he might not retain the Sivaganga seat in the coming general election

correct?

ar leader to centrestage

He won Sonia Gandhi's confidence during the Narasimha Rao regime. Due to criticism that the government was dragging its feet on the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, a Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency was set up and Narasimha Rao asked Chidambaram to keep Sonia Gandhi briefed on the progress of the investigations.

Chidambaram is not entirely free of controversy. Some say his son Karthik could be his soft spot. But mud has rarely stuck. Reputed to have a glad eye, he was furious about a particular Bangalore allegation some years ago and even issued a denial which only fuelled further speculation. A natty dresser, he has a liking for the Page 3 crowd though his photograph rarely appears in those columns.

HE is said to live in a spartan manner in his bungalow in Lutyens' Delhi. Till a few years ago, he would – to the disconcertment of many – answer his residential phone and screen calls by saying, "Mr Chidambaram is not at home" when the caller clearly recognized his voice. Despite a reputation for being arrogant, he is said to be helpful to people facing genuine distress due to government red tape and bureaucracy.

To his critics in the Congress and the Dravidian parties, he is an opportunist to the core. They dismiss his Prime Ministerial ambitions categorically. First, he might not retain the Sivaganga seat in the coming general election. Then, the Congress has to secure the critical arithmetic to be in the running again. Considering the party's standing in Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, this might not come to pass. And thereafter he has to win Sonia Gandhi's trust over other heavyweights, including Manmohan Singh. g

SHARAD SAXENA

Chidambaram: stars in his eyes?

Rise, fall, rise, fall ...of an

THE MAN WHO FLEW TOO HIGH

by Tara Patkar

LIKE Icarus of yore, Shashank Shekhar Singh, the former pilot who took UP Chief Minister Mayawati's Sarvajan Samaj programme to soaring heights and was rewarded with the office of the first Cabinet Secretary of the state, lately finds his wings rendered useless and has plummeted to earth.

Shashank Shekhar was once the prime mover behind all of Mayawati's major policy initiatives. But, if the discerning noticed the dwindling away of the queues of Ministers and bureaucrats outside his office some time ago, his fall from grace was publicly and irrefutably exposed at the function to mark Mayawati's 53rd birthday on January 15. On the dais at her 5 Kali Das Marg residence, she was flanked by State Advisory Committee Chairman Satish Chandra Mishra and Chief Secretary Atul Kumar Gupta. Shashank Shekhar was seated below, amid other bureaucrats.

Till now, Shashank Shekhar had been perceived as Mayawati's right hand and Mishra as her left hand. However, Additional Cabinet Secretary Vijay Shanker Pandey has taken Shashank Shekhar's place. It is Pandey who now conducts all review meetings of departments, with Mishra. Department heads have been issued an order requiring them to report to either Pandey or Mishra.

This toothless visage of Shashank Shekhar is quite a far cry from the smug Cheshire cat he was a year and a half ago. Enjoying full hilt the privileges of being Mayawati's most trusted lieutenant, he put in place her new administration, true to her character and disposition. Along with his appointment as the first Cabinet Secretary in UP's history, he had also been made the administrative head – a position that till then belonged to the Chief Secretary. This had understandably caused much resentment in the bureaucracy. Though the IAS officers of the state did not protest against the move, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court, arguing that the appointment was unconstitutional and violated the cadre rules. Subsequently, the state government again amended the Business Rules and restored the position of the Chief Secretary as the head of the administration. However, this was only on paper and Shashank Shekhar continued to oversee all administrative functioning. The first curtailment of Shashank Shekhar's power came in October last year, when the Chief Minister decreed that he was neither the administrative head nor could he summon the Principal Secretaries who would henceforth report to Pandey.

It is easy to see why Mayawati reposed such absolute faith in this self-styled visionary and reformer. Though she did not appoint him as the supreme boss until her fourth term, she had decided on it during her previous tenure in 2002-03. His style of functioning is similar to hers – authoritarian, disciplinary, forbidding. Yet, officers loyal to him gush about his professionalism – he never takes no for an answer, is a hands-on and on-site officer, and is strict about deadlines. In a state where the bureaucracy holds a secret poll every year to pinpoint the most corrupt official, he is untouched by any scam in a 25-year career.

Shashank Shekhar's integrity has been acknowledged even by Mayawati's fiercest rival, former CM Mulayam Singh Yadav. It was the SP chief who first made Shashank Shekhar his Principal Secretary in 1990. Such was the mutual respect that Mulayam rarely turned down a request from one of his favourite officers.

He was once the prime mover behind Mayawati's major policy initiatives. But, if the discerning noticed the dwindling away of the queues of Ministers and bureaucrats outside his office some time ago, his fall from grace was publicly and irrefutably exposed at Mayawati's 53rd birthday

all-weather supercrat

FOTOS4INDIA

An official recalls that a willing Mulayam, then Defence Minister, was hijacked from his aircraft and taken to meet Minister for Culture S Jaipal Reddy, to give permission for Greek musician Yanni to perform at the Taj Mahal. The Yanni concert was a pet project of Shashank Shekhar's and Mulayam obliged him. But it was not long before Shashank Shekhar was sidelined and shunted to Civil Aviation in Mulayam's last tenure. His sympathizers say this was done "on the express orders of Amar Singh".

It is also said that Shashank Shekhar was in touch with Mayawati even before her stunning victory. Immediately after it, the CM's secretariat (the fifth floor, as it is popularly called) was set up and the state machinery juggled and put in order. Yet, the first person – that too a non-IAS officer – to be elevated to Cabinet Secretary in UP has much of credit in his record. He is obsessed with developing infrastructure, keen on Public-Private Partnerships, and his pet project is to build an international airport in Noida and a 1,000-km Ganga expressway. But most of his plans have failed to fructify. The proposed airport at Noida hangs in the balance due to the proximity to Delhi's international airport. Farmers revolted against the Ganga expressway from Ballia to Noida.

In a state where the bureaucracy holds a secret poll every year to pinpoint the most corrupt official, he is untouched by any scam in a 25-year career

Recently, not a single developer submitted the Request For Proposals to execute the 12 multi-crore projects in six major cities under the state government's Integrated Urban Rejuvenation Plan. The projects include an international convention centre, a super-speciality hospital and an international sports complex in Lucknow, three multi-storied car parks in Ghaziabad and Allahabad, a transport nagar in Varanasi, super-speciality hospitals in Agra and Kanpur, and a ring road. The total cost was estimated at over Rs 2,200 crore. Shashank Shekhar also tried to give a better shape to the rural employment policy and a series of other policy measures for public sector undertakings, particularly in transport and health, but the results are dismal.

Commissioned in the Army in 1970 and reputed to be an ace helicopter pilot, Shashank Shekhar originally came to the state government on deputation. He was absorbed as Director of Civil Aviation in 1980. In the mid-1980s, Chief Minister Vir Bahadur Singh made him Secretary, Civil Aviation. That was the turning point and Shashank Shekhar used the opportunity to the fullest to prove his mettle. He was responsible for the creation of new as well as revival of old and abandoned World War II airfields in the state that then included present-day Uttarakhand. He served in various capacities, including as Principal Secretary of the Tourism and Technical Education departments. He was made CMD of Indian Airlines in 1990, when VP Singh was Prime Minister, but was not relieved by the state government to take up the assignment. During President's Rule in 1995-96, Governor Romesh Bhandari made him his Principal Secretary. g

The Enduring Babu: Memoirs of a Civil Servant
By KC Sivaramakrishnan
Publisher: Har-Anand
Price: Rs 295

Babudom, fro

Hilarious accounts of encounters with BC Roy,

AFTER joining IAS in 1958 Midnapore or Medinipur, as it is now called, was my first posting, as Assistant Magistrate on training, to commence my career as an IAS official of the West Bengal Cadre. When I learnt that I was to be one of the 'neutrals' destined for Bengal, I was disconsolate. With all the stories of the Quit India uprisings and violence during partition, to a docile South Indian Bengal seemed a frightening prospect. Before leaving for Midnapore I had sought a meeting with my mentor in Madras, the Principal of the Law College, which was my last academe, for advice and solace. He was far from consoling. On the contrary he seemed rather happy that I was going to Bengal. "Bengal has been a great society, Sivaramakrishnan," he said, "You now have the rare opportunity to closely observe its decay." I had not taken such a sociological approach to posting. As part of the training, while I was sitting as magistrate in the court, a case of someone's wife being spirited away by someone came up for a preliminary hearing to decide whether charges should be framed at all. At some point of time the young lady at the centre of the controversy was produced. Since it was not clear who the husband was and who the pretender, I had to ask her with whom she would like to stay pending the court proceedings. "Whatever the Magistrate Sahib decides," was the sweet reply. Fortunately, there was Nari Niketan which saved the Magistrate from abetting adultery unwittingly.

Midnapore was lashed by storms in August 1959. And when we, the trainees, paid a courtesy call on the Chief Minister (CM), Bidhan Babu, as Dr BC Roy was known in all of Bengal, the demand for data gathering on flood damage came to us. Bidhan Babu was the stuff that legends are made of. Fearful, we entered his office. The CM, who was looking at some papers, lifted his spectacles and looked at us cowering in a corner of the room close to the door. He asked the Chief Secretary, "Satyen, who are these boys and what are they doing, standing near the door?"

The Chief Secretary replied that we were a group of young IAS officers allotted to the state of West Bengal and we were spending our time on district training.

"What training?" asked the CM. "Does it mean they have no work and are here for sightseeing?"

The Chief Secretary, who had worked with Bidhan Babu for a long time and was well versed with his ways, said, "You are partly right, sir, but these boys are here to pay their respects to you and to have your blessings."

"What blessings? I want them to work. Can I give them some work or is there any rule which says that IAS trainees cannot do any work."

"No, sir," said the Chief Secretary, "you can give them whatever work you want them to do."

The CM then turned to us and said, "Why are you standing there? Come and sit down here."

The CM then spoke to us about the floods in the state. "My District Magistrates are all sending highly inflated figures of flood-affected people. In many cases, it exceeds the population of the district. I expect you boys to be a little more honest. Go and make a fair assessment of the people affected, identify the spots where the shelters could be put up and get back to me with your reports in 15 days."

It was in 1958 during the Bharat Darshan tour for IAS probationers that I first saw Durgapur. Ten years later I was back as SDO, Asansol. Much had taken shape in Durgapur in these 10 years. Durgapur was

a product of the vision and drive of Dr BC Roy and he was determined to recapture West Bengal's leadership in industry with its coal reserves and access to iron ore nearby. He was not very tolerant of the Government of India's policy on what the state could do and what the Centre's own prerogatives were. I recall the launching of India's first DC electric locomotive in Chittaranjan in October 1961 when both Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Roy were present for a lunch. Dr Roy and Nehru were having a conversation by themselves in one of the rooms. We were out in the verandah and the lawns, waiting for lunch. At some point of time we heard Roy shouting, "Jawaharlal, if you pursue this policy, the states will revolt."

Nehru was counselling patience. "Dr Sahib, Dr Sahib, please try to understand." For a few minutes the arguments seemed to continue. Eventually, the voices sub-

Durgapur was a product of the vision and drive of Dr BC Roy and he was determined to recapture West Bengal's leadership in industry with its coal reserves and access to iron ore nearby

m the inside

refugees and government office politics

Football mania

One day, a bulky file landed on my desk. It was about electrification of the sub-divisional office complex. I noticed that one portion of the complex, some six or seven rooms, had been marked "exclude". My personal secretary was reticent when I sought an answer and suggested it would be best if I talked to SDO, PWD (Electrical). A couple of days later, Bada Babu came. I asked him why some rooms were left out. "Sir, please take a look at the large shield in the glass behind your chair and I presume you will want our office to continue to win the tournament." I said nothing would please me better. "In that case, sir, I beg you not to pursue your queries about the electrification project." I could not understand the connection. "What has the football tournament got to do with office electrification?" Bada Babu elaborated, "Sir, who will play football if there are no *punkha*-pullers and how do we employ them if we have electricity?" The logic was stunning and simple. A few rooms had to be kept out from the electrification project so that the *punkha*s and the pullers could be retained in the SDO's office, and the tournament's rolling shield remained where it was. I signed the file and gave it to Bada Babu without further ado.

Faces of Bengal: memories of an administrator

sided. Lunch was announced and eaten in partial silence. When Dr Roy was ready to leave, Nehru said, "Dr Sahib, won't you stay for a little longer and leave after dinner?" Dr Sahib would not oblige. He left for Durgapur.

On 26 January 1960, I, as one of the young magistrates in the district, was asked to go to a refugee camp, hoist the flag, make a speech, and distribute saris and dhotis to the inmates. This was going to be my first ceremonial event. On arrival, I was led to a makeshift stage. Someone blew a conch shell, a garland of half-wilted marigolds was put around my neck and a child was lifted to my face to put a dot of sandalwood paste on my forehead. Someone came to the stage and proposed that our new Joint Magistrate be elected the Chief Guest for the occasion. The proposal was duly seconded and carried by a round of applause. Flag-hoisting over, speeches followed. I made mine in broken Bengali. The distribution of saris and dhotis was the next item. After a formal vote of thanks, I got ready to leave. From some corner of the small crowd came cries of "*Inquilab zindabad*, give relief, give loans, give refugees decent homes" and so on. The same gentleman who had so ably proposed my name to be the Chief Guest approached me once again and told me, "Sir, you have to wait for some time. You cannot go now."

I asked, "What would you like me to do?" He said, "Nothing. You just have to sit down because we are going to gherao you." I tried to argue but was told politely and firmly that this was a longstanding tradition and every year the Chief Guest was gheraoed after the ceremonies. I had no alternative but to sink down into my seat. The slogan-shouting continued and the gherao lasted for an hour. A few days later I submitted an angry and impassioned report to the District Magistrate arguing how keeping the refugees in camps on dole and relief had made them irresponsible dependants and how much I wished to see the word "refugee relief" removed from the government's glossary. The comments of my boss were prompt and sharp. "These are programmes decided by the government. Your personal feelings are not relevant."

In September 1988, I joined the Ministry of Urban Development as Secretary. Mohsina Kidwai was my minister. She was taking a meeting to consider the reply to a "starred" question about the total number of housing units built for slumdwellers, how many allotted, how many under construction etc. It transpired that as many as 3000 units could not be accounted for. The otherwise gracious minister was steadily losing her patience. She became quite angry. She turned to me and said, "Mr Sivaramakrishnan, do you realize what sort of a ministry you are going to handle? How do I explain to Parliament that 3000 housing units are missing?" After another round of explanation, she rose, thumped the table, and said, "I want to know the truth." The intrepid Joint Secretary then stated in a very calm voice, "Madam, here we are trying to answer a Parliament question. It has nothing to do with finding the truth. That is a completely different process." The tension that had built up in the meeting until then dissolved in laughter.

I moved to Delhi in 1985 to become the first Project Director of the Central Ganga Authority and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Environment. In 1988, I became Secretary in the Ministry of Urban Development and after three years Secretary, Supply. I retired from the IAS in 1992.(*Edited extract*) g

birthdays

IAS officers' birthdays | Feb 16, '09-March 15, '09

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IPS officers' birthdays | Feb 16, '09-March 15, '09

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For the complete list, see www.indianbuzz.com

TRACKING

For a complete list of appointments & retirements, see www.indianbuzz.com

KC VERMA
The 1971-batch IPS officer of the Jharkhand cadre has been appointed Secretary, Research & Analysis Wing, Cabinet Secretariat.

VS SAMPATH
The 1973-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed Power Secretary in the Government of India.

RAJIV MATHUR
The 1972-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has taken over as the Director of the Intelligence Bureau.

RV RAJU
The 1975-batch IPS officer of the Jammu & Kashmir cadre is now Director General of the newly constituted National Investigation Agency.

URMILA SUBBARAO
The 1975-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has become Chief Vigilance Officer of Air-India.

RAJIV MATHUR
The 1974-batch IPS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre is now Director General of the National Crime Records Bureau.

FEROZA MEHROTRA
The 1974-batch IAS officer of the Haryana cadre has become a consultant to the Planning Commission.

VANHELA PACHUAU
The 1976-batch IAS officer has become Chief Secretary of Mizoram.

RAKESH KUMAR TANDON
The 1978-batch IRTS officer has joined Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation as Managing Director.

SUDHIR BHARGAVA
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Department of Fertilizers.

NEELAM KAPOOR
The 1982-batch ISS officer has been appointed Director General of the DAVP.

JAYANT DAS GUPTA
The 1981-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre is now Secretary in the Economic Advisory Council of the Prime Minister.

KM GUPTA
The 1982-batch IES officer is now Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

APURVA CHANDRA
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the Maharashtra cadre has become Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

ANIL BISEN
The 1982-batch IES officer is now Economic Adviser to the Department of Economic Affairs.

RAJIV KUMAR
The 1984-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre has been appointed Resident Commissioner of the state in Delhi.

SHAKTI SINGH NEGI
The 1983-batch IES officer has been posted as a Director in the Ministry of Rural Development.

ATANU PURKAYASTHA
The 1983-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

PRADEEP KUMAR
The 1987-batch IRS officer is now CEO/Director in the India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd for three years.

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Moving On: ias and ips officers retiring in February 2009

ASSAM-MEGHALAYA
B Purkayastha (1990)

JHARKHAND
Shankar Jaipuriyar (1994)

JAMMU & KASHMIR
Balwant R Kundal (1972)

KERALA
S Sukumaran (1993)

MADHYA PRADESH
Mala Shrivastava (1971)
GK Srivastava (1989)

MAHARASHTRA
Satyanarayana (1972)
BR Pokharkar (1996)

MANIPUR-TRIPURA
PL Thanga (1974)

ORISSA
Subas C Pani (1972)

TAMIL NADU
N Vasudevan (1986)

UTTAR PRADESH
Deo Datta (1985)

WEST BENGAL
AS Biswas (1977)

ips

AGMUT
L Sailo (1987)

ASSAM-MEGHALAYA
PC Neog (1989)

BIHAR
VK Joshi (1971)

KARNATAKA
MF Pasha (1986)

MANIPUR-TRIPURA
A Romen Kr Singh (1982)

NAGALAND
J Changkija (1975)

PUNJAB
Gurinder P Singh (1987)

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MANY MORE SATYAMS WAITING TO HAPPEN...

THE markets were on their way upwards and comfortably crossed the 10,000 mark. Then came the sudden end to the rise – in fact, crash-like conditions were witnessed. My understanding, when I predicted it, was based on the fact that the markets may not be able to fully discount the unknown factors such as Nortel and Satyam. Such incidents, though widely reported by the media as one-off incidents, may not turn out to be so and many more Satyams are waiting to happen not only in India but the world over. Such incidents occur more when the going gets tough and manipulations are hard due to the all-round liquidity crunch. Companies dealing in invisibles are more prone to this kind of lack of transparency, making India more vulnerable since services and such invisibles are the main forex grosser for the country. We have started hearing about Educomp – again a service provider in the education domain.

Such incidents occur more when the going gets tough and manipulations are hard due to the all-round liquidity crunch. Companies dealing in invisibles are more prone, making India more vulnerable

The market crash and the Satyam episode have compelled all investment analysts to rethink the way they analysed stocks till date. These two events have possibly thrown most of the investment analysis techniques followed by the leading investment analysts into a garbage bin. The basics of investment analysis have again come to the fore. Investors need to give maximum weightage to the quality of management and the corporate governance practices, including the quality of financial information reported by the companies. This no doubt leaves the investors with a very restricted choice for the quality of corporate governance practices followed by even some of the leading and most respected corporates may come under the scanner.

Coming to the market outlook, the scenario is not looking cheerful – at least in the near future and things will become worse before they start getting better. The news flow on the international front has not been all that encouraging though the domestic problems appear to be waning. The biggest banks in the world, Citibank and Bank of America, are in dire straits. The sub-prime mortgage crisis followed by excess leverage crisis and collapse of the real economy may lead to massive defaults in commercial real estate, credit cards, and corporate debt.

The US Federal Reserve is determined to prevent a general banking collapse which simply means taking over massive bad debts of the financial sector that may have far-reaching unintended consequences for the entire world. The deleveraging process as it sets in motion is further likely to compound the problems, especially for India since it may witness yet another and more serious bout of unwinding by FFIs. Some of the Indian banks are known to be going through tough times.

As against the dismal show by the US corporates, the Indian scenario has not been that gloomy. The quarterly results of a very large number of companies have in general been better than the market expectations. However, the net profit grew at the slowest pace in the three months ending December 31, hinting at the depth of the economic slowdown. The experts warn that the worst is yet to come... probably in the next quarter. Low inflation amid the global slowdown is not a surprise. But the monetary expansion may see a situation of deflation in the not too distant future – opening yet another serious front for the economy.

Hindustan Zinc

(CMP Rs 339)

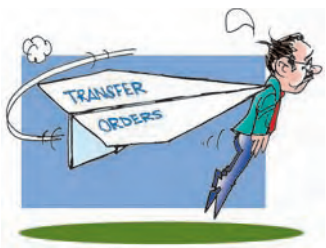
HINDUSTAN Zinc, the largest integrated metal producer in the country, is amongst the lowest-cost zinc producers in the world. The company has its own mines, smelting capacity and power plants. Net sales of the company more than tripled in the last three years with net profit increasing by over seven times in the same period. With falling commodity prices, the operating margins have come down but being the lowest-cost producer places the company in a far better position compared to many other international players in the field. The company is almost debt-free. It is going in for massive expansion plans, to be financed mainly by internal accruals. This will give a considerable boost to its top and bottom lines. Moreover, the company has cash and a near-cash balance almost equal to its current market capitalization.

Further downfall in commodity prices is the main risk the company runs. There are also concerns about its corporate governance practices. The stock is available at its lowest-ever PE of less than 4, based on its trailing 12 months EPS which makes it an almost risk-free buy. With the commodity prices at their lowest, one can expect them to rise considerably once the world scenario starts improving thereby giving a considerable boost to its bottom-line. Investors with 2-3 years' time horizon can look for very decent returns. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.

Woe is UP's Dalit officers

UP's State Advisory Committee Chairman Satish Chandra Mishra, the architect of social engineering and the most trusted colleague of Chief Minister Mayawati, seems to be after the Dalit IPS officers of the state. Ram Deo, a 1982-batch IPS officer, was brought to the headquarters of the Director General of UP Police as Inspector General of Police, Establishment – a powerful and lucrative assignment – after Mayawati came to power. Known for an impeccable service record and competence, Ram Deo embarked on making this office corruption-



free and ensuring that all files moved only as per the rules. His stint did not last long. He was transferred to the obscure post of IG, Wireless. Sources say he paid the price for not being willing to oblige Mishra and yielding to political intervention in the governance of his department.

It seems the Dalit-Brahmin unity that brought Mayawati to power is becoming a curse for honest officers.

Land sharks in high places

PUNJAB Governor and UT Administrator Gen. SF Rodrigues is at daggers drawn with Minister of State for Finance and Union Banking Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal, the MP from Chandigarh. The Chandigarh administration reportedly wants to acquire about 270 acres of agricultural land and sell it to builders at a throw-away price. Bansal argues that a real state developer, Parshwanath, has been

allowed to run a non- IT venture in the area earmarked for IT activities and sell the flats at exorbitant prices allegedly to NRIs only. Various citizens' forums have also joined hands with Bansal, concerned about the loss of green cover.

Refusing to backtrack, the Chandigarh administration asserts that one-third of the amount received from the sale of flats will go to the rehabilitation projects for a large number of slumdwellers. Rodrigues reportedly has a care-two-hoots attitude as he has a powerful friend in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

As for Bansal, his main worry is the electorate – especially with the general election not too far away.

Lalli's rolling – in Gujarat

YET again, BS Lalli, the retired IAS officer of the UP cadre who is now CEO of Prasar Bharati, is in the thick of a controversy. This time, it is the live coverage of "Vibrant Gujarat", which reportedly brought him close to Chief Minister Narendra Modi through his personally-appointed Director, Ahmedabad – TS Gagan.

Ignoring all recommendations made by I&B Minister Anand Sharma, Lalli is going ahead with the saffron agenda vigorously. During a recent Parliament session, a BJP MP put up a question on the number of foreign visits Lalli had made since joining Prasar Bharati. Lalli then met Rajnath Singh through a journalist in UNI. Rajnath told the MP to leave Lalli alone as he was "our man". But the MP, further irked by this, put up another question in the next Parliament session.

Lalli's ways have left both Priyaranjan Dasmunsi and now Sharma shellshocked, as it is a surprise that he is going against the government of the day to whom he owes his appointment. Dasmunsi had shifted one BM Bakshi, Director, to Tripura for non-performance and RSS links.

Lalli tried to bring him back but Dasmunsi refused. Now, with Dasmunsi in the ICU, Bakshi is back with a bang and orchestrating a reshuffle. He has also secured the coveted post of Director of the Delhi centre.

Lalli is being advised on BJP matters by Bakshi and a former Director of Kashmiri origin, who was forced to resign after inquiries were instituted against him while he was posted in the Commercial section of DD.

Lalu plan spells doom for officers

A FILE has sent the officers of the Railway Ministry into a tizzy! Over 80 officers of Indian Railways at the Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) might be forced to sit idle if the move, till now a closely guarded secret at Rail Bhawan, gets the approval of the Cabinet.

NER, one of the 16 zones of Indian Railways, has functioned smoothly for the past six decades with its three divi-

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

sional offices in Lucknow, Izatnagar (Bareilly) and Varanasi. Headquartered at Gorakhpur, it has under its jurisdiction about 1,243 km of rail track. Now, Railways Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav is planning to add one more division to this zone – to be located at a desolate place, Thave, about 8 km from his native village, Phulwaria, in Bihar's Gopalganj district.

The proposal is already in the pipeline and, if approved, will snatch about 500 km of rail track from the existing Varanasi Division – rendering the officers of this Division underemployed.

Also, development of a new Division will trigger unhealthy competition among railway officers to grab prime posts because of an estimated budget of about Rs 2,000 crore required for the task. g

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